

Editorial 1

Future directions of the journal

Julian Savulescu *Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, Australia*

Raanan Gillon retired as Editor of the *Journal of Medical Ethics* in April 2001. This is my first editorial as new Editor, though I was not involved in the editorial review of the contents of this issue of the journal. The *Journal of Medical Ethics* is now the highest impact journal in medical ethics in the world. Raanan has had a significant impact on medical ethics in Europe and internationally. Most of all, he has made medical ethics accessible and relevant to health professionals.

The goals of the journal will build on its existing strength (see boxes 1 and 2). There will be changes to the format and content of the journal. The journal is now available online (see box 3). New sections will be introduced to increase the relevance of the journal to medical students, trainees, members of research ethics committees and the

1. Articles appearing in the journal should ideally be:

- Relevant and comprehensible to the health professions or research related to medicine
- Rigorous in their analysis
- Challenging
- Engaging
- Able to make a difference to practice and the public understanding of practice

2. Values of the *Journal of Medical Ethics*

- Ethical issues arising in medicine should be subjected to a philosophical analysis.
- Empirical research, including social science research, is relevant to the resolution of ethical dilemmas.
- Medical ethics is international and attention should be given to issues arising in Asia and the developing world.
- There are many perspectives on ethical issues (including religious and cultural perspectives) and dialogue on ethics should be inclusive.
- Health professionals and researchers should learn the skills of ethical analysis and be engaged in identifying and analysing issues in their own practice.

3. JME is now online www.jmedethics.com

Benefits

- Digital Island software allows *free* access to any user from the developing world.
- The full text of articles in JME is searchable by keyword, and the references include hyperlinks to Medline.
- JME is one of the 200 journals at High Wire Press, a division of Stanford University's Green Library (<http://highwire.stanford.edu>). References to any of these journals are linked to full text versions of that article free.
- The JME is part of the BMJ Publishing Group. This aims to join the CrossRef initiative which will link directly to articles in participating journals.
- Abstracts are online beginning at 1975.
- Each issue will be placed online approximately on the date it is mailed to subscribers, so the online site may be days or even weeks ahead of your receipt of a paper copy.
- The table of contents of the upcoming issues will regularly be placed online as a future table of contents.
- We plan to introduce online submission and peer review within the next year.
- Email alerts will allow you to receive the table of contents of new issues by email or notification that an issue is online.
- eLetters will allow you to respond to articles within days of publication.
- Links will connect you to the world of medical ethics.

public. There will also be sections devoted to Clinical Ethics, Research Ethics and Teaching and Learning Ethics. A Current Controversies section will summarise a current ethical controversy in biomedicine and invite expert commentary. Through these changes, the journal will continue to lead thinking about ethics in the health professions internationally. It is also my hope as Editor that both those contributing to the journal and those reading it can take a lead in public and professional discourse on ethical issues in biomedicine generally. The greatest achievement of a journal of medical ethics would be to change what people do.